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Chairman: Mr. Maitland (South Africa)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 75: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/57/20 and A/57/213)

1. **Mr. Requeijo Gual** (Cuba) said that outer space activities were having a growing impact on all aspects of human life. Fascination for outer space had stimulated the creativity of millions of people, encouraging the development of new technologies to improve people's standard of living. Satellite meteorological observation, in particular, had helped improve weather forecasts, decrease the number of victims of natural disasters as well as the damage caused, and prevent the devastating effects of climate change.

2. Cuba wished to reiterate that outer space must remain the common heritage of mankind, in accordance with three basic principles which must govern the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space.

3. First was the need to preserve outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes, while promoting international cooperation and stimulating the economic growth of all countries in the interests of real sustainable development which must include the necessary transfer of advanced space technology from the most developed countries in that field towards the less developed. In that connection, Cuba opposed any attempt to amend the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space that did not take account of the interests of all States, particularly the developing countries.

4. Secondly, Cuba emphatically rejected plans to unleash an arms race in outer space, especially considering new military doctrines proposing the development and deployment in outer space of new and expensive means of destruction in order to establish the hegemony of the most powerful over the rest of the inhabitants of the planet. In that regard, his delegation wished to reiterate its deep concern about the fact that some nuclear Powers which had space capability were continuing to block negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the formulation of an international instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. To that end, it was vitally important, as a first practical step, to establish a moratorium on the deployment of weapons in outer space, until the international community reached agreement on the issue.

5. Thirdly, his delegation agreed that the existing legal regime governing the use of outer space was insufficient to prevent such an arms race and considered that new mechanisms were urgently needed in order to ensure adequate monitoring and verification of the implementation of space law.

6. Cuba welcomed the strengthening of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two functional subcommittees through a broadening of its membership, and fully supported the applications of Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for membership in the Committee.

7. Cuba attached great importance to the development of strategies aimed at minimizing the negative consequences of space debris. More attention must also be given to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources on board, and to defining the responsibility of their owners.

8. Cuba wished to reiterate the importance of strengthening international and regional cooperation for the development of space research. Such cooperation could not be limited to a small group of developed countries. It was vital to make maximum use of space technologies to promote human development, protect the environment and ensure real sustainable development in an atmosphere of peace and prosperity for the benefit of all mankind. Cuba was prepared to do all it could to contribute to such efforts.

9. **Mr. Tarasenko** (Russian Federation) said that bearing in mind Article 13 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Russian Federation favoured the development of a single comprehensive convention on space law, since it was only in formulating such an instrument that mutually acceptable solutions could be found to issues not settled by consensus and the status as legally binding norms of various principles laid down in documents of a recommendatory nature could be established. The formulation of such a convention would also allow for the clarification of a number of provisions in the basic space treaties in view of the diversification of space activities.

10. The Russian Federation considered that developments in the international community's exploration and use of outer space pointed to the need

to resume discussions on the establishment of a world space organization. The outcome of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) reflected the broad scale of the tasks facing the international community in that area.

11. He wished to stress that outer space must not become a source of new threats to mankind. On the contrary, it must and should help the international community respond to new challenges and threats.

12. In April 2001, Moscow had been the venue for an international conference to prevent the militarization of outer space, entitled "Space without weapons: an arena for peaceful cooperation in the twenty-first century". The Russian Federation believed that that dictum should be translated into reality and was prepared to undertake immediate practical steps to that end.

13. At the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Russian Federation had proposed that the work should begin on a comprehensive agreement on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space and on the non-use or threat of force against space objects, the first step being the establishment of a moratorium on deploying weapons in outer space. The Russian Federation was prepared to enter into such a commitment immediately if other major space-faring countries joined such a moratorium.

14. Russian initiatives introduced at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly had led to a Russian-Chinese working paper on possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space (CD/1679).

15. Recently the Russian Federation had put forward a new initiative aimed at enhancing transparency and trust in the sphere of outer space, having declared its readiness to provide timely information on planned launches of space objects, including their purpose and basic parameters.

16. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the new opportunities that were emerging for outer space exploration would be developed for the benefit of peace, international security and cooperation, and in the interests of the sustainable development of all mankind.

17. **Mr. Sherba** (Ukraine) said that his country attached great importance to the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and took note with appreciation of its report and recommendations.

18. In 2002, natural disasters had inflicted immense damage in Europe and other regions of the world. Many potential disasters that could threaten the very existence of human civilization were yet to be studied. There was also a need to develop more effective measures to control space debris and achieve a deeper understanding of the effects of solar activity on human life. International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space was become increasingly important for meeting such challenges.

19. As one of the leading space-faring countries, Ukraine had always supported the efforts of the United Nations in promoting global dialogue on the most important issues relating to outer space. His delegation fully supported the recommendation by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that regional centres for space science and technology education should be established on the basis of affiliation with the United Nations.

20. In 2002, 10 per cent of space launches throughout the world had been carried out with the aid of Ukrainian launch vehicles. Ukraine was prepared to continue to offer its capabilities for the implementation of joint space projects. Examples of cooperation on outer space included the use of Ukrainian launch vehicles for the "Sea Launch" and other satellite launch projects, the use of a space research centre in Evpatoria for the tracking of spacecraft under several international projects, the implementation of the Russian-Ukrainian project to develop the "Sich-1M" satellite and the preparation of a multi-volume analytical treatise on international space law.

21. This delegation noted with satisfaction that in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/51 of 10 December 2001, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had considered the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and the preliminary draft Protocol on Matters Specific to Space Assets. Those instruments had the potential to significantly facilitate the development of commercial activities in outer space. His delegation favoured retention of the item on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-second session to be held in 2003.

22. His delegation shared the view that the Legal Subcommittee should consider the issue of the

appropriateness and desirability of drafting a universal comprehensive convention on international space law. A proposal to that effect had already been submitted to the Subcommittee by China, Greece and the Russian Federation (A/AC.105/C.2/L.236). His delegation believed that such an instrument would help fill lacunae within the current international space law system and that the drafting of the convention would prompt the Subcommittee to adequately address the legal implications of the rapid advances in modern space activity.

23. His delegation believed that the legal aspects of space debris removal deserved further attention by the Legal Subcommittee. It highly appreciated the analysis carried out by the European Centre for Space Law, which could serve as a starting point for further discussion within the Legal Subcommittee.

24. In conclusion, he wished to reiterate the continued commitment of Ukraine to the strengthening and expansion of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space so that its benefits would serve to improve the well-being of all mankind.

25. **Mr. Suman** (India) said that India was pleased to note the progress achieved by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its forty-fifth session, including its success in recent years in facilitating international cooperation in matters relating to outer space.

26. India remained convinced that the peaceful applications of space exploration had great potential to contribute to progress in all countries, in particular developing countries.

27. In its report, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had noted that the beneficial applications of space exploration in a wide variety of areas had enormous relevance for human development and that their wider adoption would strengthen the goal of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. India fully concurred with that conclusion.

28. The Committee had achieved notable progress in its work on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. A working group had been established to prepare the relevant report for submission to the General Assembly; in that connection, India supported the recommendation that a separate item entitled "Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration of Peaceful Uses of Outer Space" should be included in the agenda of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

29. India was satisfied with the work of the Committee's two subcommittees and the activities that had been carried out by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in spite of budgetary constraints. India also fully supported the priority themes of the activities of the Programme.

30. Turning to the concrete achievements of the Indian space programme over the past year, he noted that international cooperation had been a vital component. In particular, India had signed the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters; a United Nations Workshop on Satellite-Aided Search and Rescue had been jointly organized in Bangalore with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs; and the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific continued to make good progress, benefiting 340 scholars from 39 countries.

31. Recognizing that space technology could play a vital role in national development, India was making focused efforts to ensure its development and application, while maintaining a strong commitment to its peaceful use and to international cooperation. His delegation believed that the United Nations, through the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, would continue to further enhance international cooperation in that vital area.

32. **Mr. Mohamed** (Malaysia) said that his country fully supported the strategy of promoting the peaceful uses of outer space to attain the goals of development, particularly in developing countries, in such areas as strengthening communications infrastructure, disaster management, education, agriculture, environmental protection and natural resource management, and remained committed to the advancement and development of space technology. That commitment was demonstrated, in particular, by the inclusion of space science in the Third Malaysian Outline Perspective Plan as one of the key areas of activity for the building of a knowledge-based society.

33. Under the National Remote Sensing Programme, Malaysia was implementing a National Resources and Environment Management project and had also embarked on the construction of a ground receiving station, which would receive real-time satellite data.

34. Noting the need to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space through the conclusion of new treaties, he expressed concern about certain ongoing research and testing of outer space weaponry, which could threaten social and economic progress and have a negative impact on the established international security structure.

35. In line with its support for regional and interregional cooperation in space science and technology, Malaysia was making its applications available to all countries. Malaysia was also contributing to international cooperation through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Since 1990, the Malaysian Centre for Remote Sensing had implemented a range of bilateral and multilateral programmes for the transfer of Malaysian microwave technologies.

36. In order to achieve greater cost-effectiveness in the use of capacity for launching spacecraft into near-equatorial orbit, Malaysia was developing, in collaboration with the United States of America, a Small Payload Orbit Transfer (SPORT) vehicle prototype. The use of such vehicles would enable more frequent launches and, taking into account the higher reliability of such launch vehicles, the probability of success would be increased and insurance costs reduced. The launching of the first such vehicle, which had been under development for nearly two years, was scheduled for the end of 2003.

37. In view of the successful launching of the first regional telecommunication satellites, MEASAT-1 and -2, which were providing optimum coverage for the East Asian region, Malaysia was planning to launch another four satellites of that series. Construction of MEASAT-3 had already begun; it would represent a new generation of satellites with higher capacity than the previous ones.

38. Malaysia welcomed the efforts to establish regional centres for space science and technology education in academic institutions in developing countries. In that connection, Malaysia planned to organize appropriate educational programmes and was already in the process of manufacturing a mobile observatory to be used for educational and practical purposes.

39. Malaysia was also developing an educational portal (web site) to assist teachers of astronomy and students. In addition to a virtual astronomy laboratory, the portal would also offer virtual astronomy classes with tutorials and examination papers.

40. Lastly, he noted that Malaysia would continue to support international cooperation in all areas of activity of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space while at the same time rigorously pursuing its efforts to develop its own indigenous capability.

41. **Mr. El-Farnawany** (Egypt) thanked the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the information he had provided on the Committee's efforts to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Committee's leading role in strengthening international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space in the interests of humankind should be recognized. The Committee's work over the past four decades in the scientific, technical and legal fields and the fundamental principles it had elaborated with a view to guaranteeing the use of outer space by all countries without any discrimination and exclusively for peaceful purposes aroused a sense of pride.

42. The efforts of the Legal Subcommittee to assess the status of implementation of the five treaties governing the regime and setting out the legal principles for the use of outer space also inspired optimism.

43. Guided by its wish to promote the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, Egypt had participated in the activities of four action teams. His delegation supported the call for the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly of a new item on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

44. His delegation wished to underscore the importance of using space technologies in the interests of the developing and least developed countries in order to facilitate the implementation of their development plans. Egypt endorsed the statement made by the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

45. Desiring to promote the strengthening of the capacity of developing countries in scientific research and the use of space technologies, his delegation called on Member States to respond constructively to the

recommendation that funds should be provided to cover the costs for the least developed countries of participating in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies (see A/57/20, para. 33).

46. Egypt had established a council for space science and technology, which was entrusted with elaborating a national programme for the application of space technologies in the following areas: using remote sensing for the exploration of desert zones; establishing a scientific base in Egypt; drawing on various aspects of international cooperation with a view to developing a space programme in Egypt; and utilizing the achievements of space science and technology in the interests of developing various branches of the national economy.

47. Egypt wished to align itself with those countries that had expressed support for the admission of Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

48. **Ms. Rusu** (Romania) said that her delegation, while fully endorsing the statement made by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union, wished to highlight some significant developments in Romania's national space activities. In September 2001, the Romanian Space Agency had initiated a series of new projects relating to space and aerospace policy and infrastructure, space exploration, space applications, aerospace technologies and spin-offs. By the end of 2002, an advanced space and aerospace technology park, housing a whole range of research and industrial organizations, would be established in Bucharest. In spring 2002, several centres of excellence in space science and applications, including high-energy astrophysics, parallel computing, complex fluids in microgravity, precision agriculture, and space applications in medicine and health monitoring, had been established. Another example of Romania's commitment to international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space was the participation of Romanian scientists in the development of several international space missions in collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States of America and the National Space Development Agency of Japan.

49. Using space communications, earth observation data and global navigation satellite systems, Romania had achieved significant success in applied fields, including seismic risk assessment in the area of Bucharest, disaster management, telemedicine and the use of radar interferometry for the study of the Black Sea coast. She highlighted the cooperation in precision agriculture with the National Centre for Space Studies of France.

50. During the past year, Romania had continued to strengthen cooperation with ESA with a view to deeper integration of its space research and industrial capabilities in European programmes. Her Government was participating directly in the implementation of the fifth framework programme of the European Commission and intended to submit a number of project proposals for the sixth framework programme, particularly with respect to such European initiatives as Galileo and Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES).

51. Romania paid the closest attention to providing support to developing countries in the use of space applications, so that achievements in the fields of space science and technology could be used for the benefit of all humankind. Romanian experts, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, had assisted Azerbaijan in developing its own land information system and had provided consultancy services to Angola in connection with the organization of events related to the total solar eclipse in 2001.

52. Recognizing that space applications played an important role in achieving sustainable development in all countries and regions of the world, Romania had taken part in a symposium entitled "Space technology provides solutions for sustainable development", organized by the United Nations and ESA in South Africa in August 2002.

53. Lastly, she said that Romania continued to pay special attention to the expansion of international and regional cooperation in space activities. In that connection, she noted that the Network for Education and Research in Space, Science and Technology for Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe could make a major contribution to ensuring stability and development in the whole region. Recognizing the importance of education in space science and technology, the Romanian Space Agency had developed for the Network a one-year academic programme.

54. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan), noting with satisfaction the progress made in implementing the

recommendations of UNISPACE III, explained his delegation's position on a number of issues considered by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. With regard to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, he said that the militarization of outer space was a dangerous trend that needed to be stopped at all costs. That issue fell within the competence of the Committee, since military activities seriously affected international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space. Countries with significant space capabilities could contribute to the achievement of the collective goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. In that connection, he noted the need to conclude a comprehensive convention to prevent an arms race in outer space and expressed support for the Sino-Russian draft of possible elements of a future international treaty against the deployment of weapons in outer space, which had been circulated at the session of the Conference on Disarmament in 2002.

55. He emphasized the importance of equitable access to the geostationary orbit for all countries, particularly developing countries, bearing in mind their requirements and their limited capacity in terms of resources and technology. In his view, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was the appropriate body for further discussion of that issue with a view to the development of legal and technical concepts relating to the geostationary orbit. In addition to the divisive issue of the rights of States to the geostationary orbit, the related legal and technical issues required further examination. The issue of access to the geostationary orbit should also be discussed in coordination with the conference of the International Telecommunication Union.

56. Pakistan also attached great importance to the definition and delimitation of outer space in view of the need to distinguish between outer space and airspace and to ensure greater legal certainty in space law. A major breakthrough in that area had been the approval by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space of a revised questionnaire on possible legal issues with respect to aerospace objects. The questionnaire would help to achieve a better understanding of the definition and delimitation of outer space.

57. Turning to the issue of remote sensing, he said that the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Space, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/65 of 3 December 1986, set out guidelines for remote sensing and provided safeguards against the abuse of remote sensing to the detriment of the interests of other States. Pakistan supported the proposed incorporation of the Principles in a more binding legal instrument. It also wished to underscore the need to give developing countries access to remote sensing data.

58. Pakistan remained concerned about the issue of space debris. He welcomed the consideration of a report on the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue and drew attention to the possibility of using outer space to establish communication infrastructures for early warning systems and to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

59. All countries must have the opportunity to utilize the benefits of space science and technology, and it was therefore necessary to intensify efforts to disseminate satellite data and to provide assistance in training specialists. In that connection, he stressed the need to increase voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

60. Lastly, he reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration with a view to promoting among Member States cooperation in space science and technology and the sharing of the benefits of outer space research without any discrimination.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.